

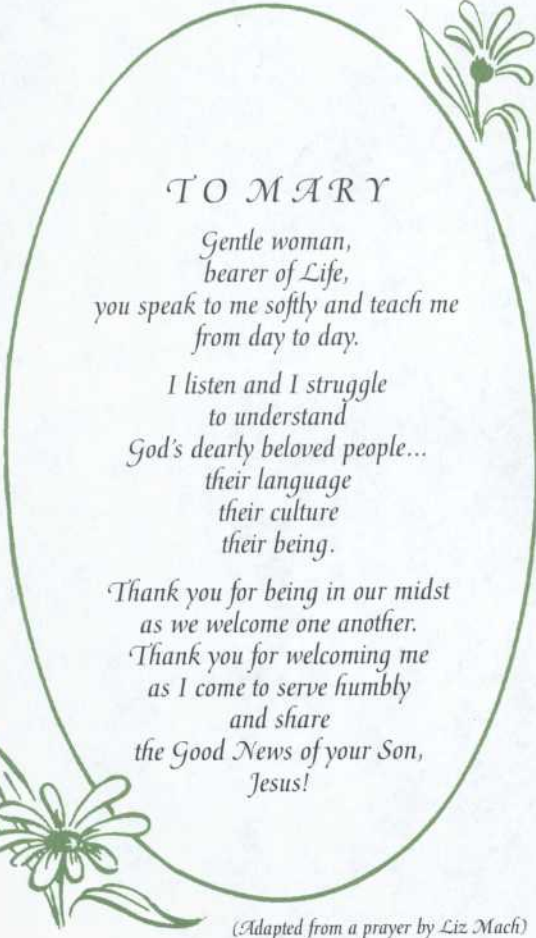
MIC MISSION NEWS

Series 19, No. 3
May-June 1992



CELEBRATING MARY

During May, the month of Mary, let our
prayer be a simple one, the prayer of a
missionary...



TO MARY

*Gentle woman,
bearer of Life,
you speak to me softly and teach me
from day to day.*

*I listen and I struggle
to understand
God's dearly beloved people...
their language
their culture
their being.*

*Thank you for being in our midst
as we welcome one another.
Thank you for welcoming me
as I come to serve humbly
and share
the Good News of your Son,
Jesus!*

(Adapted from a prayer by Liz Mach)

Photo credits

Front: E. Plamondon, m.i.c. (Philippines)
A Filipina maiden, dressed for a festivity.

Back: MIC Photo (Japan)
Flowers for Mary from a kindergarten class in
Xaverio School, Aizu Wakamatsu.

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Back to the source

This is my first time to be in Canada, yet I feel I was given such a warm homecoming. Indeed, in Montreal, I have my extended family - a family with many relatives!

At present, I am in formation at the MIC International Scholasticate in Longueuil with four companions from Haiti, Peru and Madagascar. Under the loving guidance of our formators (one Japanese and two Canadians), we are nourished from the source of our MIC charism and spirituality.

Despite our different cultural backgrounds and the existing language barriers, deep among us and shared among us are the same aspirations and the same spirit of thanksgiving. Through our daily living of an evangelical and multicultural fraternal life, we are preparing ourselves for our definite commitment to the Lord.

By deepening our knowledge of the MIC Institute and through contacts with our Sisters, we learn how to be real missionaries, ever open and docile to the



Sr. Pauline (center) with MIC Sisters in Joliette.
"How good it is to belong to one family!"



Participants in the International Scholasticate, 1991-'92
 (clockwise): Jeanne-Marthe Razanadrasoa (Madagascar),
 Ozana Jean-Baptiste (Haiti), Pauline Yuen (Hong Kong),
 Enna Saint-Louis (Haiti), Rosario Zari (Peru)

Spirit... joyful missionaries who never tire of proclaiming the Good News that God loves us.

During this time of preparation, we also have opportunities to participate in the different ministries undertaken by the Sisters. I am happy to be a member of the MIC team involved in missionary animation in English-speaking parishes.

The first time I visited a parish for the promotion of the MIC MISSION NEWS, I was reminded of our Sisters who, years ago, preceded us in this missionary animation activity. In my mind, I could see them going from door

to door, inviting families to subscribe to our mission magazine, THE PRECURSOR. I could hear them encouraging young students, in different schools, to help little Chinese babies with their prayers and pocket money.

It dawned on me that I have a debt of gratitude to the faithful of Canada. Didn't they somehow contribute to my return to God? Faith in Jesus Christ does not come naturally to a Chinese growing up in a non-Christian milieu like Hong Kong. I, for one, though baptized at the age of two, was a Catholic only in name since the members of my own family were non-Christians. It

was not until I studied with the MIC Sisters that I came to know who God was for me.

My conversion must have been earned by the prayers and sacrifices of many people, among whom were those who showed interest in the China mission. Their assistance in various forms made it possible for missionaries to continue working in the missions. Joy and wonderment filled my heart at this discovery. In particular, I wished to thank the Church in Canada for sending missionaries to Hong Kong. How happy I am to be on Canadian soil to realize this hope.

During visits to St. Edmund of Canterbury Parish in Beaconsfield and St. Thomas More Parish in Verdun, I had occasions to express my thanks. How touched I was by the warm welcome of the parish community, many of whom took the time to tell me how they had asked their parents for money to help Chinese babies. Others recalled how they received the MIC Sisters at their homes.

Though they shared with us different stories, these parishioners had one thing in common - the joy of meeting the Sisters once again! Some of them expressed their unique joy and appreciation to see me, a Chinese woman, now also a missionary.

This joyful encounter deepened my gratitude. Indeed, I felt indebted to Mother Foundress and to all the Sisters who had blazed the trail before me. No doubt, their personal witness of humility and selfless dedication to the missions touched and helped many others. The warm welcome I received from the parishioners made me realize how privileged I am to be reaping the fruit of my Sisters' work. This inspires me to follow in their footsteps and to give my best for the Kingdom.

It is said that time flies when one is happy. For me, time spent at the International Scholasticate is passing with 'supersonic' speed. I will soon leave this hearth for my future assignment. Taking a step in the unknown is quite uncomfortable, if not scary. But such is our life as missionaries - to be ready to go elsewhere whenever needed. Yet, wherever I go and whatever I do, I am not alone since I have a large family praying for me.

The source from which I have been nourished here in Canada will continue to flow in me. May it flow through me to my brothers and sisters in other parts of the world - particularly to Hong Kong and to mainland China! *

Pauline Yuen, m.i.c.

Missionary Intention



May That devotion to Mary, Mother of the Church, transform families into houses of prayer, of Church life and of missionary solidarity.

CUBA

Welcoming the Virgin of 'El Cobre'



Hearts full of hope!
Gloria (left) and
neighbours.

A prayer vigil held to honor the Virgin Mary was a special occasion for us to see once again Mary's role in our lives.

Elvira, a member of our parish community in the village, invited us to join in the celebration. She wanted to welcome the Virgin of 'El Cobre', patroness of Cuba, whose statue was to stay in her house for a day. We gladly accepted the invitation, happy to celebrate Mary with Elvira, her family, friends and neighbours.

The statue of the Virgin was placed on a humble altar, decorated with an abundance of flowers and candles. The Cuban flag was also on the altar. Elvira's guests laid their offerings before

Mary's statue: a platter of caramels, coconuts and other fruits.

In front of the altar was a container filled with rose petal water. Everyone who came to the vigil sprinkled their hands and head with the rose petal water, to wash away impurities and to drive away the evil spirit. It was touching and impressive to see the people, especially young men, kneel in front of the altar to perform this ritual.

For all of us present, the gathering was a beautiful opportunity to show our love for Mary and to express our desire to follow her example. Spontaneous petitions addressed to the Virgin

of Charity were mostly prayers for peace, health and serenity.

With music, dancing, toasts and sharings, the celebration went on until midnight. Upon Elvira's invitation to bid the Virgin farewell, prayers were recited and everyone returned to their own homes singing, "Virgin Mary, we your children beseech you, make us all brothers and sisters."

What did this celebration mean to us? The Virgin of 'El Cobre' is 'the' Mother who lives in the sanctuary of love we Cubans have built for her in our hearts

since many generations. She needs no introduction. Our love and devotion to her are essential elements of our way of life.

Surely, Mary hears our petitions and presents our difficulties and hopes to God. Whatever religious or political differences our people may have, she will help to unite us in one love; she will lead us to Christ. We continue to trust because with God, nothing is impossible. From the hearts of a people thus rises a joyful cry of hope: "Virgin Mother, make us one!" *

Gloria T. Aguilera
Novice

Missionary Intention



June

That the Church of China may attain more freedom in its activities and reach a full communion with the successor of Peter.

The following statistics have been taken from a variety of sources and are as accurate as they can possibly be made at this time.

Number of Catholics in China	3,600,000	Number of priests	1,000
Number of churches	3,000	Number of sisters	1,200
Number of national Seminaries	1	Number of seminarians	800
Number of regional Seminaries	5	Number of sisters in formation	1,000
Number of provincial Seminaries	8	Number of ordinations in 1991	106
Number of diocesan Seminaries	7		

Tripod, November-December, 1991

Behold your Mother

*Behold the Woman who mothers your birth
birth as God's beloved child
image of His beauty and love
gifted with new life in Jesus Christ.*

*Behold the Woman who mothers your growth
growth in consciousness of who you are
chosen for a special fold
called to thank and praise the Lord.*

In Manila, a procession to honor Mary.

Photos: M.





Our Lady of the Barangay

*Behold the Woman who mothers your journey
journey through life in joy and pain
loving surrender in loss or gain
gift of self to others in service freely given.*

*Behold the Woman who mothers your discipleship
responding joyfully to the Master's call
faithful to your grateful yes
unto everlasting praise.*

Behold your Mother - the Woman whose name is

M A R Y

Guadalupe Sempio, m.i.c.



Photos: M. Duque, m.i.c.

When young pilgrims meet

Inspired by the theme "The Spirit you received makes you children of God" (Romans 8, 15), about two million young people from 80 countries walked 100 km. to meet Pope John Paul II during his visit to the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland.

One of the pilgrims, Patrice, a young man of 21 from Laval, Quebec, shares with us his memorable experience.

Djinn dobre! (Hello in Polish)

Having returned from a pilgrimage to Eastern Europe, (August 2-20, 1991) two of my dreams have been realized: to see Europe and its people and more especially, to share my Christian faith with other young people from different countries. The privileges of participating in the life of a living Church and of feeling God's loving presence in moments of reflection and prayer are truly unforgettable.

Fellow pilgrims meet

The Canadian group numbered 73 pilgrims. From Quebec, we proceeded to Lyons, France, where we joined another group of pilgrims organized by the Assumption Sisters. Travelling

together by bus to Poland, we got acquainted with one another, sang hymns and reflected on the document, "Heirs of history and builders in faith". Sharing with Elisabeth, Benedict and Catherine, new friends from Lyons, I became aware that the societies to which we belong, experience similar problems concerning the Christian faith.

The warmth of Czechoslovakia

My fellow pilgrims and I were met and greeted very warmly by



new friends in Czechoslovakia. Upon our arrival, I had the pleasure of giving a medal of the Blessed Virgin to an elderly lady who, touched by my gesture, shed tears of happiness.

At the international forum, relevant themes were presented to us for reflection. I chose as my topic "The behaviour of youth facing the call to liberty." I was impressed with the lively interest shown by the different delegations and with their active participation. In particular, I learned a lot from my fellow-pilgrims who gave a testimony to their faith. The forum ended on a joyful note with singing and dancing!

To make sure we were in good shape for the long walk to Czestochowa, we spent our first night

with Polish families. I was welcomed by a family of five, three of whom were young people: Thomas, 19 years, Rafael, 21 years and Barbara, 24 years.

Not having a common language, it was difficult to communicate with one another. However, I succeeded in expressing my thanks and in telling my gracious hosts that I was happy to be with them.

The walk to Czestochowa

A blessing from the prelate of Opole signaled the official start of our pilgrimage. All through the long walk, we sang hymns and prayed. Along the way, Polish peasants greeted us in their native tongue and Church bells rang to announce our arrival in the villages.

Photo on left: Patrice Desrochers (left) with fellow-pilgrims.

Below: Young pilgrims near the end of their long walk to Our Lady's shrine.



Fatigue overtook most of us as we approached Czestochowa. Nonetheless, the bond of fellowship and concern forged among our group was a source of inspiration and encouragement to carry on.

Finally at Czestochowa, we climbed Mount Jasna Gora to reach the shrine of Our Lady of Czestochowa. In this beautiful sanctuary, we had the joy and privilege of venerating the Icon of the Black Virgin, Queen of Poland.

The Pope's visit

Two days were set aside for the visit of Pope John Paul II in Czestochowa. Among the huge crowd of pilgrims, the large Russian delegation was given priority to meet the Pope, this being its first time ever to have such an opportunity.

On our part, a blessing from the Pope was given to us by the Bishop of Pothiers. A special prayer service for the Canadian pilgrims was held in the evening before our departure. Peace and joy filled our hearts!

Auschwitz and the return

While in Poland, our group had the chance to visit the concentration camp in Auschwitz. This visit brought us some painful images from the past and it led me and my companions to reflection and prayer.

I became more aware of my own desire to build joy, peace and forgiveness around me. I know that this is not easy... my heart needs to be converted each day!

I remember so well the warm welcome extended to us by the people throughout our stay in Europe. I was enriched by a wealth of new experiences and by exchanges with new friends. In a special way, the pilgrimage to Poland has marked me spiritually. My great wish now is to live and share with my peers here in Quebec this sense of 'belonging' to the global family of the Church.

*Da vidzenia! (Au revoir) **

Patrice Desrochers



*Sow seeds of living faith,
of love of God
and love of the Church.*

Delia Tetreault, m.i.c.

China revisited

In 1909, six Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception left Montreal, Canada for Canton, in the southern region of China. This first departure for China was subsequently followed by many others. The China missions expanded to the northern provinces of Lioning and Jiling, and also to Chuming and Xuchou in the central region of the Province of Jiangsu.

Until 1953, the MIC Sisters served the Chinese people in various ministries: dispensaries, schools, orphanages, pastoral

work in parishes, private language and music lessons, and assistance in the formation of local religious Sisters. A missionary presence of more than forty years... indeed, a voluminous chapter in the history of the MIC Institute as well as in the lives of God's people in mainland China!

In the hope of gathering substantial information about the lived experience of the Sisters and of the Chinese people during those years, Sr. Huguette Turcotte and I left for China in the autumn of 1991.

At Tsuming, Sr. Celia (right), with Theresian Sisters, Mary Loh, sup. gen. (left) and Theresa Loh, mistress of novices (center).



H. Turcotte, m.i.c.

As we traveled from one region to another, I had the impression of walking in the footsteps of our first missionaries. Tracing back, as much as was possible, the places where our Sisters worked, we tried to contact their friends of old. Our hearts were filled with joy at the thought of a possible reunion!

For most of these new-found friends, our meeting brought back vivid remembrances of the past and lively memories of the MIC Sisters. They shared openly with us the treasured memories of their past experiences, highlighted by their gratitude to the Sisters they knew and loved.

Indeed, there were stories to hear - stories from people who went through a lot of hardship, suffering and pain. And in these sharings, one could sense a patient hope and deep aspirations for a brighter future.

H. Turcotte, m.i.c.



Sr. Celia with Mrs. Pei, a Christian friend in Siping.

As a Chinese MIC, visiting China was truly a pilgrimage to the land of my ancestors. The 17-day visit was a 'once-in-a-lifetime' experience which brought me countless blessings.

In many ways, I experienced China prudently opening up to outsiders. I had glimpses of the nation catching up with modern technology and sciences. I saw it as a society of young people searching for meaning in life. Visiting convents and seminaries filled with young members led me to reflect deeply and to give thanks to the Spirit who continues to call and animate men and women of goodwill.

Although I witnessed some tension in Catholic communities and families whose members adhere to different ideologies, I was privileged to see the Spirit at work, animating a living Faith among many believers and bringing about steps towards a reconciliation between the official and unofficial Church.

Among many other things, I learned that the history of a religious Institute, or that of a nation, cannot be written in one day. I praise the Lord for His bountiful graces! I thank Him for allowing the Chinese people to write their own history in a unique and colorful way, characterized by their human and spiritual struggles. *

Celia Chua, m.i.c.

LOVE is a flower in season
at all times and within reach
of every hand.

This springtime, several MIC
Sisters leave for mission lands for
the first time. You can help them
bring the Good News of God's
love to His children in 15 coun-
tries...

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MIC Sisters through an annuity
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will
- by subscribing to MIC MIS-
SION NEWS
- by giving a gift subscription to a
friend.



J. Boily, m.i.c. (Peru)

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